

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: CHANGES IN GDR LEADERSHIP

1. SUMMARY. MOST SWEEPING PERSONNEL CHANGES IN GDR LEADERSHIP SINCE HONECKER'S ELECTION AS SED FIRST SECRETARY IN MAY 1971 TOOK PLACE OCTOBER 2-3 AS SED CENTRAL COMMITTEE CONVENED IN PLENUM TO SELECT NEW CADRE FOR POLITBURO AND CC AND AS VOLKSKAMMER MET TO ELECT WILLI STOPH CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL OF STATE AND HORST SINDERMAN, CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, END SUMMARY.

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2. FIRST STEPS IN LONG-AWAITED PERSONNEL CHANGES IN SED AND GOVERNMENT HIERARCHY WERE TAKEN AT TENTH PENUM OF SED CENTRAL COMMITTEE, OCTOBER 2, AS PARTY ELITE UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSED PROPOSALS OF FIRST SECRETARY HONECKER THAT HEINZ HOFFMANN, GDR MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE, BE CALLED TO FILL VACANCY IN POLITBURO MEMBERSHIP LEFT BY DEATH OF ULBRICHT, AND THAT TOTAL NUMBER OF POLITBURO CANDIDATE MEMBERS BE INCREASED BY THREE. NEWLY-ELECTED CANDIDATE MEMBERS ARE: WERNER FELFE, SED FIRST SECRETARY IN AHLE, JOACHIM HERRMANN, CHIEF EDITOR OF NEUES DEUTSCHLAND; INGE LANGE, CHIEF OF CC'S DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS; KONRAD NAUMANN, SED FIRST SECRETARY IN EAST BERLIN; AND GERHARD SCHUERER, CHAIRMAN OF STATE PLANNING COMMISSION. POLITBURO CANDIDATE MEMBER WALTER HALBRITTER WAS RELIEVED OF HIS POST, ALLEGEDLY AT OWN REQUEST. HALBRITTER'S WITHDRAWAL, ALONG WITH DEATH OF GEORG EWALD (BERLIN 1608), LEFT NET TOTAL OF TEN CANDIDATE MEMBERS IN CURRENT POLITBURO.

3. MAJOR CHANGES IN CENTRAL COMMITTEE APPARATUS INCLUDED ELECTION OF HORST DOHLUS, WERNER KROLIKOWSKI AND INGE LANGE AS CC SECRETARIES, AND RELEASE OF GUENTER MITTAG FROM HIS DUTIES AS CC SECRETARY IN ORDER TO DEVOTE HIMSELF TO HIS NEW FUNCTION AS FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. IN ADDITION, CC CANDIDATE MEMBERS BRUNO BEATER, WOLFGANG BEYREUTHER, HANS-JOACHIM BOEHME, EGON KRENZ, HELMUT SAKOWSKI AND URSULA ZSCHAU WERE PROMOTED TO FULL CC MEMBERSHIP.

4. WITH PARTY LINES THUS CLEARED, STAGE WAS SET FOR VOLKSKAMMER TO RUBBER STAMP ON OCTOBER 3 SED NOMINATIONS OF WILLI STOPH AS NEW CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL OF STATE AND HORST SINDERMANN AS NEW CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. NEITHER SELECTION CAME AS SURPRISE, DESPITE SOME LAST MINUTE RUMORS TO CONTRARY, AND RITUAL CEREMONY TOOK PLACE WITH MINIMUM OF FANFARE. VOLKSKAMMER ALSO APPROVED SELECTION OF BERNHARD QUANDT, SED FIRST SECRETARY IN SCHWERIN, AS MEMBER OF COUNCIL OF STATE. NOT CLEAR WHETHER QUANDT WILL RETAIN HIS DISTRICT PARTY POSITION OR NOT.

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5. COMMENT. WHILE FULL IMPACT OF CHANGES WILL ONLY BE FELT OVER COURSE OF TIME, THERE APPEARS LITTLE DOUBT THAT HONECKER HAS EMERGED WITH HIS HAND MORE FIRMLY ON RUDDER OF POWER THAN EVER BEFORE. WITH STOPH RELEGATED TO CEREMONIAL CHAMBER AND SINDERMANN CONTENDING WITH ALBATROSS OF ADMINISTRATION, HONECKER HAS FREER REIN TO REFINE HIS HOLD ON PARTY. IN THIS REGARD, MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

IN POLITBURO MAY WELL BE CANDIDATE MEMBERSHIP FOR FELFE
AND NAUMANN, KNOWN HONECKER HENCHMEN. TOGETHER WITH
TISCH AND KROLIKOWSKI, THEY SHOULD GIVE HONECKER EVEN
FIRMER CONTROL OVER PROVINCIAL PARTY APPARATUS. AS TO
HOFFMANN'S ELEVATION TO POLIBURO MEMBERSHIP, IT PRESUMABLY
FOLLOWS SOVIET PATTERN TO SYMBOLIZE SUPPORT OF MILITARY
FOR CURRENT POLICIES AS WELL AS IMPORTANCE OF SECURITY IN
ERA OF DETENTE.KLEIN

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